

Message Text

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53

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /105 W

----- 082369

R 011029Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9192

INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 12714

3.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJ: COURTESY CALL ON BISHOP OF DANANG PHAM NGOC CHI

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOLG TEL FM AMCONSUL DANANG TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON 30 SEP 74

RPTD FYI

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 0436

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: COURTESY CALL ON BISHOP OF DANANG PHAM NGOC CHI

1. CALLED ON BISHOP OF DANANG PHAM NGOC CHI AFTERNOON OF
SEPT. 28.

2. CHI EXPRESSED STRONG PERSONAL OPPOSITION TO RECENT RADICAL
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CATHOLICS' ANTI-GVN POLITICAL MACHINATIONS. NO MORE THAN A DOZEN

CATHOLIC CLERGY ARE ACTUALLY ACTIVE IN THESE ACTIVITIES AND THEY DO NOT REPRESENT THE CHURCH. ALL SENIOR CATHOLIC CLERGY ARE OPPOSED TO FATHER TRAN HUU THANH'S TACTICS AND SUPPORT ARCHBISHOP OF SAIGON NGUYEN VAN BINH'S RECENT STATEMENTS. CHI DISCOUNTED SPECULATION THAT ARCHBISHOP OF HUE NGUYEN KIM DIEN TACITLY SUPPORTED FATHER THANH BY LEAVING HUE DAY BEFORE DEMONSTRATIONS. CHI SAID THAT TIMING OF ARCHBISHOP'S DEPARTURE WAS UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCE AND NOTHING MORE.

3. CHI BELIEVES THAT MOST OF CATHOLIC PARTICIPANTS IN SEPT. 8 DEMONSTRATIONS IN HUE WERE TRICKED INTO PARTICIPATION. HE POINTED OUT THAT BESIDES CATHOLICS A NUMBER OF POLITICAL GROUPS WERE ALSO INVOLVED AND PARTICULARLY NOTED FATHER THANH'S PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH DAI VIET POLITICIAN HOANG XUAN TUU (COUSIN OF FORMER I CORPS COMMANDER HOANG XUAN LAM). CHI SPOKE FAVORABLY OF PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU, SAYING HE WAS NOT PERFECT BUT WAS CLEARLY BETTER THAN ANY OF THE ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE. HE WAS CRITICAL OF RADICAL CATHOLIC OPPOSITIONISTS SAYING THAT THEY RISKED CREATING POLITICAL DISORDER WHICH WOULD AID THE COMMUNISTS.

4. CHI SAID THAT HE HELD A MEETING OF THE PRIESTS OF HIS DIOCESE DURING THE WEEK OF SEPT. 8-14 AND WARNED THEM THAT FATHER THANH INTENDED TO STAGE A DEMONSTRATION IN DANANG. CHI FORBADE THE PREISTS TO ASSIST FATHER THANH. ON SEPTEMBER 15 A FEW PEOPLE ASKED FATHER NGUYEN QUANG SACH, THE PASTOR OF THE THANH BO/DUC LOI CHURCH FOR PERMISSION TO STAGE A DEMONSTRATION. FATHER SACH CONTACTED CHI AND THE BISHOP REITERATED HIS BAN ON DEMONSTRATIONS. FATHER THANH ARRIVED IN DANANG SEPT. 16 AND LEFT SEPT. 18. THERE WERE NO DEMONSTRATIONS.

5. CHI EXPLAINED THAT THE RUMOR WHICH CIRCULATED BRIEFLY ON SEPT. 21 THAT 6,000 CATHOLICS WOULD DEMONSTRATE NEXT DAY IN DANANG WAS APPARENTLY MANUFACTURED OUT OF WHOLE CLOTH. HE SAID MASS AT CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL IN DANANG ON SEPT. 22 AND ONLY THING OUT OF THE ORDINARY WAS PRESENCE IN CHURCH OF LARGE NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS. IN CHI'S OPINION FUTURE OF RADICAL CATHOLIC MOVEMENT DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON GVN'S DEALINGS WITH MOVEMENT'S LEADERS IN SAIGON.

6. CHI DOES NOT BELIEVE LOCAL BUDDHISTS IN DANANG WANT TO
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COOPERATE WITH RADICAL CATHOLIC PROTESTS AT THIS POINT IN TIME. HE IS LESS SANGUINE ABOUT BUDDHIST INTENTIONS FOR THE FUTURE AND BELIEVES THAT "THERE MAY BE TROUBLE IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS". (HE COULD NOT OR WOULD NOT BE MORE SPECIFIC.)

7. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION SEPT. 28 WITH A CONGEN OFFICER, DANANG MAYOR, COL. DAO TRONG TUONG, EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT HIS CITY WAS IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER OF DEMONSTRATIONS OR POLITICAL

DISTURBANCES. FATHER THANH IS IN SAIGON, AND THE MAYOR BELIEVES CATHOLICS IN MR-1 WILL WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS AT THE SAIGON LEVEL WITH REGARD TO THE PEOPLE'S ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT RATHER THAN PROCEED ON THEIR OWN. IN THE LONGER RUN, HOWEVER, TUONG EXPECTS HEIGHTENED POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE REGION, AND IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT AN QUANG'S POTENTIAL FOR DISRUPTION. FRANCIS

UNQTE.
MARTIN

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NNN

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